

Forever is Bullshit by prettyboiiharringrove

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maccircle — Can you talk more about tommy taking care of Billy when steve fakes his death that is such an interesting dynamic

Forever is Bullshit

“He’s fucking busy, stop calling,” Tommy growls before hanging up the phone and turning it off. Billy’s phone was buzzing obnoxiously from where it sat inside the fucking fridge that Billy had forgotten to close. It was resting easy on three percent until some moron decided they really had to talk to him.

Tommy had decided to let him sleep while he cleaned up the kitchen area, but now he’s done. He picks up the last beer bottle, having lost count of how many twelve packs Billy’s burned his way through, and tries not to fixate on his liver specifically while he’s got to worry about the *whole* person first.

He finally wanders into Billy’s room, pries a whiskey bottle out of his hands as a form of a wakeup call, and ignores Billy bitching and swearing at him, catches the pillow he throws, decides to be nice and not tease him about his crap aim since he’s sleepy and depressed.

“You’re covered in blood,” Tommy sighs as he pulls away the blanket and helps, or rather forces, Billy to sit up. Billy doesn’t remember falling asleep, just recognizes how much he hates waking up.

“Don’t worry, s’not mine,” Billy shrugs, glancing down at his shirt. It’s ripped, a few buttons popped off so that it’s open until it’s below his belly button. There’s blood splatter on his bare skin and his jeans are stained. He tries not to dwell on the fact that Steve bought him those jeans; he’s running out of things to break and he needs to save them for more pressing matters than a stupid pair of fucking pants.

“You gonna tell me *why* you’re covered in blood??” Billy shrugs again, and in most cases Tommy would just roll his eyes at his friend, but this time he’ll let it pass. The guy’s a goddamn mess, Tommy will probably let him get away with a lot out of pity alone.

“Asshole wouldn’t stop talking about him,” Billy finally answers, sounding bitter. His throat seems hoarse, and Tommy’s unsure if he’s been crying himself to sleep again, or if there was a lot of yelling when Billy got into that fight. He’s always been a pretty vocal guy, so who knows? “I’m the only one who gets to say mean shit about him,

the *only* one.”

“You need to stop picking fights,” they both know it’s not going to happen, Billy at most will nod along, and then come home with a split lip or a black eye and someone else’s blood on him, and the cycle will repeat until he’s arrested or dead. Tommy’s one to talk really, never one to turn away from a fight, just as aggressive as Billy but not nearly as deadly, not the right brand of monster.

“He alive at least?” Billy ignores the question; Tommy’s smart enough not to push.

“Why are you even here?” Billy asks the same question every time, and surprisingly it’s always a different answer. It makes him think that maybe Tommy does actually fucking care, even if it does boil down to him thinking Billy might die if he stops showing up.

“I called Hopper to see if you went into work like we talked about,” the tone sounds like he might be reprimanding him, Billy’s really not sure. He’s always kind of thought Tommy’s full of shit, but if he’s got it in him to scold Billy then it means he still sees him as human and not some sad sack of shit, so that’s another check in his plus column. “He said he hadn’t heard from you in two weeks. You’re kinda bein’ a shithead.”

“Fuck off,” Billy groans, because honestly he just wants to down some more whiskey and go back to sleep. He doesn’t care that it’s three in the afternoon or that Tommy probably brought him some food, knowing he hasn’t eaten anything since he came over a day and a half ago. Billy doesn’t really care about anything anymore, except for alcohol and how goddamn pissed he is at Steve for leaving him.

Forever is **bullshit**.

“That your catchphrase now? You’ve been sayin’ it a lot lately,” Tommy sighs, and Billy doesn’t fight him as he takes his shirt off, lifts his hips so that Tommy can get him out of his filthy pants. “You need to take a shower, you smell like ass.”

Billy ignores him, he always does until Tommy puts his arm around Billy’s waist and drags him to the bathroom.

“The fuck you callin’ my boss for anyways?” Billy doesn’t have it in him to *actually* care why his old partner is calling his new boss, doesn’t really have it in him to give a shit about anything really. “You lonely at work without me?”

“Yeah, something like that,” Tommy huffs out a laugh, putting Billy’s shirt in the trash and throwing his pants in the corner on the floor; he’ll see if he can get the stains out later, if he remembers, otherwise he’ll throw those out too.

“Wonder what that’s like,” it’s supposed to sound sarcastic, but Tommy can practically feel the hurt, knows that as soon as Billy says it, it feels like an elephant is sitting on his fucking chest, feels like he’s swallowed battery acid and squeezed hot peppers in his eyes as he fights off tears; and he just wants the floor to open up and swallow him.

Tommy sits down next to him; the shower can wait. Billy rests his head on Tommy’s shoulder, forces out a shaky breath and takes another deep one, just like *Steve* taught him. He didn’t used to be like this, not very often, never with Tommy, or really anyone for that matter, only Steve, and that was only after Steve caught him curled up in the bathroom corner one day after Neil called asking if he was going to come home for Christmas.

“I thought about going to see him,” Billy decides to put an end to their tense silence since Tommy won’t. There’s something eerie about a statement so simple, but Tommy can’t quite put his finger on it. It’s something to do with Billy’s tone that puts him on edge.

“We can go to his grave whenever. I just assumed you didn’t want to after last time,” Billy had nearly chipped the headstone and had definitely broken his hand last time he faced it, says it’s nothing like what Steve would have wanted. It was some stupid quote and something about being a great son and friend that his mom came up with, as if she would know. He spit on it and punched it a few times, and the whole time he grinned, because he knew Steve would be smirking proudly behind him.

“No, like *really* see him,” that’s what felt so wrong about it, is that Billy was thinking about dying, thinking about killing himself, and

selling it like it was a trip to the fucking park. “You know what stopped me?”

Tommy sits there, not shocked, but still somehow stunned into silence. He nods, finally whispers a “what?” and chews at his lip. He briefly wonders when Billy became so important to him, when he started loving him.

“Steve would be pissed,” he laughs a little, a few tears spilling down his cheeks. Tommy had forgotten how beautiful his laugh was until he wasn’t able to hear it anymore, was grateful that Billy was still capable of laughing, of smiling even.

“Yeah, he would,” Tommy offers him a gentle smile, moves to wrap his arm around Billy.

“Can’t believe that asshole really left me,” Billy closes his eyes for a moment as he leans into his best friend’s embrace; he wonders if he can hide from the world in Tommy’s arms in the same way he had in Steve’s. These moments are the closest he’s ever felt to safe since Steve died, and he wishes he would be grateful, but all he wants is to disappear.

“Come on, let’s get you cleaned up,” Tommy can offer a soft touch and a hand to guide him, but he’s known from the very start that when it comes to Billy’s grieving, there are no words to comfort him.

“Yeah, shower sounds nice,” Billy answers, falling back into his daze, numbness being easier to face than whatever else he might feel if he let himself.

“Come on, I got you,” he pulls him up and Billy drags his feet but he doesn’t fight the movement.

I got you. Tommy doesn’t just mean now, in this moment, when Billy’s so fragile and close to exploding that he has to handle him with caution, help him bathe, and remind him to eat. He means whenever, in any way Billy might need.

If Billy were more himself, Tommy might be more pissed off that he’s been tricked into caring this much about some asshole friend of his;

he barely cares this much about his own fucking wife.

“Thanks,” Billy whispers as he steps into the tub, hoping that Tommy hears all the things left unsaid, hopes Tommy knows that this does mean something to Billy even though he doesn’t know what, that he would really care about Tommy, love him, if he wasn’t too scared too.

A lot of words go unspoken in the hopes that some day they’ll find a better way to articulate them, and if Billy lives long enough to feel again, he’ll say all those words as soon as he can, because he’s already learned that forever is bullshit, and he’s not going to screw up again.